Will Eisner
COMIC INDUSTRY
AWARDS
WINNER

HARVEY AWARDS
WINNER

KAMOME
SHIRAHAMA

Witch Hat Atelier

VOLUME
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KAMOME SHIRAHAMA

Witch Hat Atelier

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WITCH HAT ATELIER

♦

KAMOME
SHIRAHAMA

Chapter 46

A *RETURN*, YOU SAY?

I'M NOT SURE I FOLLOW.

OH?

Hmm...

...HOW PECULIAR.

IT'S JUST RATHER UNUSUAL FOR THESE TYPES OF CONTRAPTIONS TO BE SURRENDERED SO CASUALLY.

THAT'S RIGHT.

HE ASKED ME TO SEE IT BACK TO ONE OF YOU CRIMSON-CLOAKED WITCHES NEXT TIME YOU HAPPENED BY.

SEALCHAIRS ARE TERRIBLY EXPENSIVE. AN INDIVIDUAL REQUIRING ONE FOR MOBILITY WOULD BE LOATH TO PART WITH IT.

EVEN IN CASES WHERE THE NEED WAS TEMPORARY, THE CHAIRS ARE TYPICALLY SOLD OFF VIA LESS REPUTABLE CHANNELS.

HENCE THE TRACKING SPELL INSCRIBED ON THIS ONE. WE WENT TO A GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE TO MONITOR ITS LOCATION.

Goodness! How convenient!

DO YOU HAPPEN TO KNOW WHERE THE PATIENT AND HIS GUARDIAN WERE HEADED?

SHOOMP

FWISH

AND AS LONG AS THE CHAIR REMAINED HERE, AT THE HOSPITAL...

...I'D FELT THAT ITS YOUNG USER WOULD BE AS WELL.

HOW THOUGHT-LESS OF ME.

HOW FORTUNATE. IF THEY ARE TO BE AT SILVER EVE...

...THEN I SHALL UNDOUBTEDLY CROSS PATHS WITH THEM AGAIN.

I THINK I HEARD THE BOY MENTION THE CROWN CITY'S FESTIVAL.

DEAR ME... PERHAPS EZREST?

DESPITE THE SLIGHT COMPLICA-TION...

"PLEASE. THE CHILD IS IN YOUR CARE."

THE BOY?!

GOODNESS, NO!

THERE WAS NO FULL RECOVERY.

...I ADMIT I'M GLAD.

IT IS GOOD TO KNOW HE MADE A FULL RECOVERY.

HE DIDN'T NEED IT ANYMORE! IT'S ALL THANKS TO THOSE TWO LITTLE WITCH FRIENDS OF HIS.

THEN WHY GIVE UP THE CHAIR?

HIS INJURIES WERE QUITE SEVERE.

IT WILL BE A TERRIBLY LONG TIME BEFORE HE'S ABLE TO WALK ON HIS OWN... IF EVER.

AND WHO, PRAY TELL...

...MIGHT THEY BE?

TWO LITTLE WITCH FRIENDS...?

THAT SHOULD DO IT!

OR AT LEAST... I HOPE IT DOES?

NOTICE HOW THE SIGIL IS QUITE SMALL, GIVEN THE SIZE OF THE RING?

I SUSPECT WE MIGHT FIND THE SPELL'S EFFECT TO BE A BIT LACKING.

AH. MAY I OFFER A HINT?

HMM... LET'S TAKE A LOOK.

GASP
TETIA, WAIT!
YOU MUSTN'T *CLOSE* THE RING UNTIL AFTER—
HERE IS WHAT I WOULD SUGGEST.
DRAW THE RING FIRST, THEN FILL IT WITH AS LARGE A SIGIL AS WILL FIT INSIDE.
Beast-warding Seal
WOW!
YEAH! THIS WAY, IT'LL BE MUCH EASIER TO GET THE RIGHT BALANCE!
KA
VRSH
EEP! I FORGOT HOW DANGEROUS IT IS TO CLOSE A RING WITH NOTHING INSIDE. THAT WAS A SERIOUS SHOCKWAVE...
NEXT TIME, LET'S BE VIGILANT ABOUT THE ORDER IN WHICH WE DRAW.
SHWMMM
Oopsie-daisy...
PLISH

WHEN YOU SAID WE'D BE GOING BY ROAD, I COULDN'T WRAP MY HEAD AROUND IT.

WHY TRAVEL FOR DAYS INSTEAD OF USING THE WINDOWWAY?

IT NEVER OCCURRED TO ME THAT A WITCH'S RESPONSIBILITIES WOULD INCLUDE...

...FIXING UP WORN SEALS THAT LINE THE ROADWAYS.

KA-KLUNK

KA-KLUNK

KLUNK

INDEED IT DOES.

JUST ONE OF OUR MANY DUTIES.

WHEN YOU EACH BECOME FULL-FLEDGED WITCHES...

...YOU, TOO, WILL BE OBLIGED TO PERFORM ACTS OF SERVICE. A MINIMUM OF THREE PER SEASON, IN FACT.

THEY MIGHT BE DIRECT REQUESTS FROM THE GREAT HALL...

...SIMPLE ACTS OF ASSISTANCE FOR PASSERSBY, OR DARING RESCUES IN THE FACE OF SOME NATURAL CALAMITY.

TODAY, WE HAPPEN TO BE TENDING TO ROADSIDE WARDS THAT KEEP BEASTS AT BAY.

THEY MIGHT TRAVEL THE LAND ALL YEAR ROUND, COMPLETING 20, OR EVEN 30 DISTINCT ACTS OF SERVICE PER SEASON.

SOME WITCHES TAKE PARTICULAR PRIDE IN THIS WORK AND THE REPUTATION IT BRINGS.

PLISH

THINK OF THIS TRIP TO SILVER EVE AS A LITTLE TRIAL RUN.

...YOU'LL BE JOINING OLLY AND ME FROM NEXT SNOWFALL, JOURNEYING TO AREAS IN NEED.

GIVEN THAT YOU FOUR HAVE PASSED YOUR SECOND TEST...

HEY!

ヒョイ PLUCK

AND THAT IS WHY...

I ADMIRE YOUR EAGERNESS TO STUDY, COCO, BUT LET US PULL OURSELVES FROM OUR BOOKS...

...AND BEHOLD THE BEAUTY AROUND US. ALLOW THE LAND'S MAJESTY TO BE SEARED INTO THE MIND.

...IT IS IMPORTANT WE NOT SQUANDER THE OPPORTUNITY.

HMM... A COUNTER-CLOCK SEAL...

WOW! WHAT A VIEW!

ONE MUST BE VERY CAREFUL HANDLING A SPELL LIKE THIS.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT'S ONE I'VE INTRODUCED YOU GIRLS TO, YET.

!

I KNOW...

AND... I UNDERSTAND THAT IT'S FORBIDDEN TO USE IT ON *PEOPLE.*

I DO KNOW BETTER, AND YET...

SO PLEASE DON'T WORRY. I KNOW BETTER THAN TO TRY IT.

...HAVE *YOU* EVER THOUGHT OF USING THIS SPELL ON A PERSON, MASTER?

!

YOU *KNOW*, AND YET YOU CAN'T HELP PONDERING THE POSSIBILITY?

OH, IT'S NOT JUST ME.

KRNCH "+"...

COME ALONG, GIRLS! WE MUST PITCH CAMP BEFORE SUNDOWN!

YES, MASTER!

IF ANYTHING, I'D WAGER EVERY WITCH WHO'S EVER LIVED HAS ENTERTAINED THE IDEA.

...

YES, WELL... HE TENDS TO WORK RIGHT UP TO THE LAST MOMENT.

HE'LL JOIN US IN THE CITY BY WINDOWWAY.

One more week. No. Three days. That's all I need!

IT'S TOO BAD MASTER OLLY COULDN'T COME WITH US.

I SURE HOPE OUR CUSTOMERS LIKE THE SPELL I'VE THOUGHT UP!

OH, GEE! NOW I'M REALLY NERVOUS!

I UNDERSTAND TARTAH AND MISTER NOLNOA ARE ALREADY IN EZREST READYING THE TENT.

WITH ANY LUCK, WE'LL REACH THE CITY TOMORROW, IN TIME TO GIVE THEM A HAND.

I'M THINKING OF CALLING IT THE SANDTENT STAFF... BUT I HAVEN'T DECIDED YET.

WE'RE NOT EVEN AT THE CITY, AND IT HAS ALREADY PROVEN ITS WORTH.

WITHOUT A DOUBT. YOURS IS A VERY FINE SPELL.

TMP TMP TMP

TENTY-T

TA-DAH!

AND JUST LIKE THAT...

...YOU'RE ALL READY TO CAMP!

ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS WEDGE IT IN THE GROUND...

WHNK

ZRSH

...AND THEN STAND IT UP LIKE A POLE.

AND I DESIGNED MY CONTRAPTION TO LOOK LIKE A STAFF. SEE? THAT'S WHY IT'S THE SANDTENT STAFF!

I GOT THE IDEA FROM THE TENT OF SAND COCO AND I HID UNDER IN THE SERPENTBACK CAVE.

THE DESIGN LETS IT DOUBLE AS A WALKING STICK, AND THE SPELL MEANS IT'LL PROVIDE SHELTER EVEN IN SUDDEN RAIN.

REALLY COOL.

IT'S SO COOL!

IT'S MARVEL-OUS!

Is it too silly?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK *YOUR* CONTRAPTION IS WONDERFUL, TOO!

OH, RICHEH! THANK YOU!

YOUR COMPLIMENTS ARE THE BEST! THEY MAKE MY HEART SING!

INSIDE VOICE, PLEASE.

TRAVELERS ARE GONNA BE ALL OVER IT.

...

...AND STRETCH AND WEAVE THE SHARDS INTO MATCHING BRACELETS!

IT'S SO CLEVER! SPLIT A CRYSTAL INTO TWO...

WHEN YOU PRESS DOWN ON THE PATTERN, IT CLOSES THE SPELL RING...

...AND OUT SHOOTS A RAY OF LIGHT THAT POINTS TO THE OTHER SHARD.

I'M CALLING IT THE SPLIT-SHARD BANGLE.

YOU'VE PUT A GREAT DEAL OF THOUGHT INTO YOUR CONTRAPTION'S MEANING, RICHEH.

KNOWING *WHY* YOU CREATE A SPELL IS IMPORTANT. MAGIC IS BORN FROM THE HOPES AND DREAMS OF HOW THE WORLD COULD BE BETTER.

WITH A CONTRAPTION LIKE THIS, NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO...

...YOU CAN ALWAYS FIND YOUR WAY BACK TO YOUR FRIEND OR SPECIAL SOMEONE.

PATTA

PATTA

PATTA

I MADE SOME FOR US, TOO.

I SUSPECT A SPELL LIKE YOURS, MEANT TO KEEP THOSE DEAREST TO US...

...FROM FEELING TOO FAR AWAY, REPRESENTS A DESIRE THAT WILL RESONATE IN MANY HEARTS.

IT'S ONE CRYSTAL BROKEN INTO SIX DIFFERENT PIECES, SO THEY'RE ALL CONNECTED BY A WEB OF LIGHT.

THESE ONES ARE SPECIAL.

I DIDN'T LIKE IT WHEN WE GOT SPLIT UP AT ROMONON. IT WAS KINDA SCARY.

SO I MADE THESE RINGS TO KEEP US SAFE.

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, SHINE THE LIGHT...

...AND KNOW THAT HELP IS ON THE WAY.

THAT'S THE PROMISE THESE RINGS REPRESENT.

NOD

Over-joyed

I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT!

IN FACT, I'M GONNA KEEP IT WITH ME WHEREVER I GO!

THANK YOU, RICHEH!

!

AGOTT!

OH, WELL ACTUALLY...

WHAT DID *YOU* MAKE, COCO?

I'M TERRIBLY CURIOUS TO KNOW WHAT IT IS THAT YOU'VE BEEN FASHIONING.

JUST FOR CAUTION'S SAKE. IT IS, AFTER ALL, AN ITEM THAT WOULD BE PASSING TO HANDS THAT KNOW NOT OF OUR ART.

I'VE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET SO MUCH AS A GLIMPSE. PERHAPS YOU'D ALLOW ME A MOMENT TO CHECK IT OVER?

NO.
I MEAN IT.

I...

I HAVEN'T MADE ANY CONTRAPTION.

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SHOW.

COME NOW, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE MODEST.

...AGOTT?

IF YOU'VE HIT A SNAG, I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO OFFER ADVICE...

BUT YOU'VE BEEN STAYING UP LATE FOR WEEKS WORKING ON *SOMETHING.*

OH?

THAT'S RATHER UN-EXPECTED.

THE SPELL I'VE BEEN PRACTICING ALL THOSE NIGHTS IS FOR THE PROCESSION.

NO, THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE.

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN PUTTING ANYTHING UP FOR SALE.

YOU MEAN TO *PERFORM?!*

...!

THAT'S WHY I DECIDED TO PRACTICE FOR THE FESTIVAL'S MAIN EVENT.

YES.

I'D...I'D LIKE TO CAST SOMETHING FOR ALL TO SEE.

I'M GOING TO DEDICATE A SPELL TO THE ROYAL FAMILY!

Witch Hat Atelier

Chapter 47

THERE IS AN ANCIENT POEM THAT BEGINS... "SAIL SLEEPING SKIES, THE STARS LIKE SILVER SHIPS."

LONG AGO, A MESSENGER OF THE HEAVENS DESCENDED TO THE WORLD, WHERE HE GREW SMITTEN WITH A SILVERWOOD MAIDEN...
...AND BLESSED HER WITH THE GIFT OF HIS MAGIC, THAT SHE MIGHT LIVE FREE FROM SUFFERING IN HER COLD, HARSH REALM.
BUT THE MAIDEN'S LOVE WAS SPLIT... SHE CARED NOT ONLY FOR THE STAR, BUT FOR ALL LIFE WITH WHOM SHE SHARED HER HOME.
SHE TOOK THE GIFT MEANT ONLY FOR HER...
...AND PASSED IT ON TO THE MEEKEST, MOST HAPLESS OF CREATURES IN ALL THE LAND.
THUS BEGAN THE AGE OF MAN.
THUS SPARKED THE WORLD OF THE WITCH.
'TIS AN ANCIENT TALE OF WONDER, SUNG THROUGH COUNTLESS AGES.
"SAIL SLEEPING SKIES, THE STARS LIKE SILVER SHIPS...
TILL RAPT IN BRANCHES, SET COURSE FOR WORLD ADROWSE...
TO PASS THE GIFT OF NIGHT TO SILVERWOOD LIPS...
AND SINK AS FINGERS IN HER TOUSLED BOUGHS."

IT SEEMS WE MADE IT TO THE CITY IN THE NICK OF TIME.

IN TIME?

YOU CALL *THIS* BEING IN TIME?!

THE CEREMONY TO MARK THE START OF SILVER EVE IS TOMORROW MORNING.

ARE WE SEEING THE SAME CITY?! THE FESTIVAL'S ALREADY STARTED!

HURRAH!!

A FESTIVAL, YES. WHAT YOU SEE HERE IS *GOLDEN* EVE.

!!!

THINK OF IT AS A WARM-UP... AN EXTRA CELEBRATION FOR THOSE WHO JUST CAN'T WAIT FOR THE MAIN EVENT!

AS SOON AS THE FIRST PASSAGE STARS CROSS OVER, THE WHOLE CITY GROWS GIDDY WITH KNOWLEDGE THAT SILVER EVE IS NEAR.

PEDDLERS GATHER FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE PENINSULA, AND SOON THE STREETS ARE PACKED WITH STALLS.

BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, ALL OF EZREST IS BRIMMING OVER WITH EXCITEMENT!

BUT IT'S BEEN NEARLY A MONTH SINCE THE NIGHT WE SAW THE STARS FALL!

YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THEY'VE BEEN PARTYING *THIS WHOLE TIME?*

OOOH

POP

POP

POP

POP

FWUF

FWUF

POP

DURING SILVER EVE PROPER, THERE'S A GREAT DEAL OF WORK TO BE DONE.

MANY WITCHES IN ATTENDANCE WON'T HAVE A MOMENT TO SPARE, SO THEY'RE EAGER TO ENJOY THEMSELVES WHILE THEY CAN.

GASP
はぅ

ZWRM
ぬっ…

FIDGET
そわ…

OH, HOW LOVELY...!

IN OTHER WORDS, GOLDEN EVE SERVES A VERY SPECIAL PURPOSE.

IT'S A CHANCE FOR EVEN THE BUSIEST AMONG US TO LET LOOSE AND ENJOY THE FESTIVAL ATMOSPHERE.

N-NATURALLY, WE'LL ALSO BE VERY BUSY TOMORROW...

FLINCH
ビ…

ZWRMMM

ZWRMMM

FIDGET
そわ

FIDGET
そわ

ZWRM

FIDGET
そわ

FIDGET
そわ

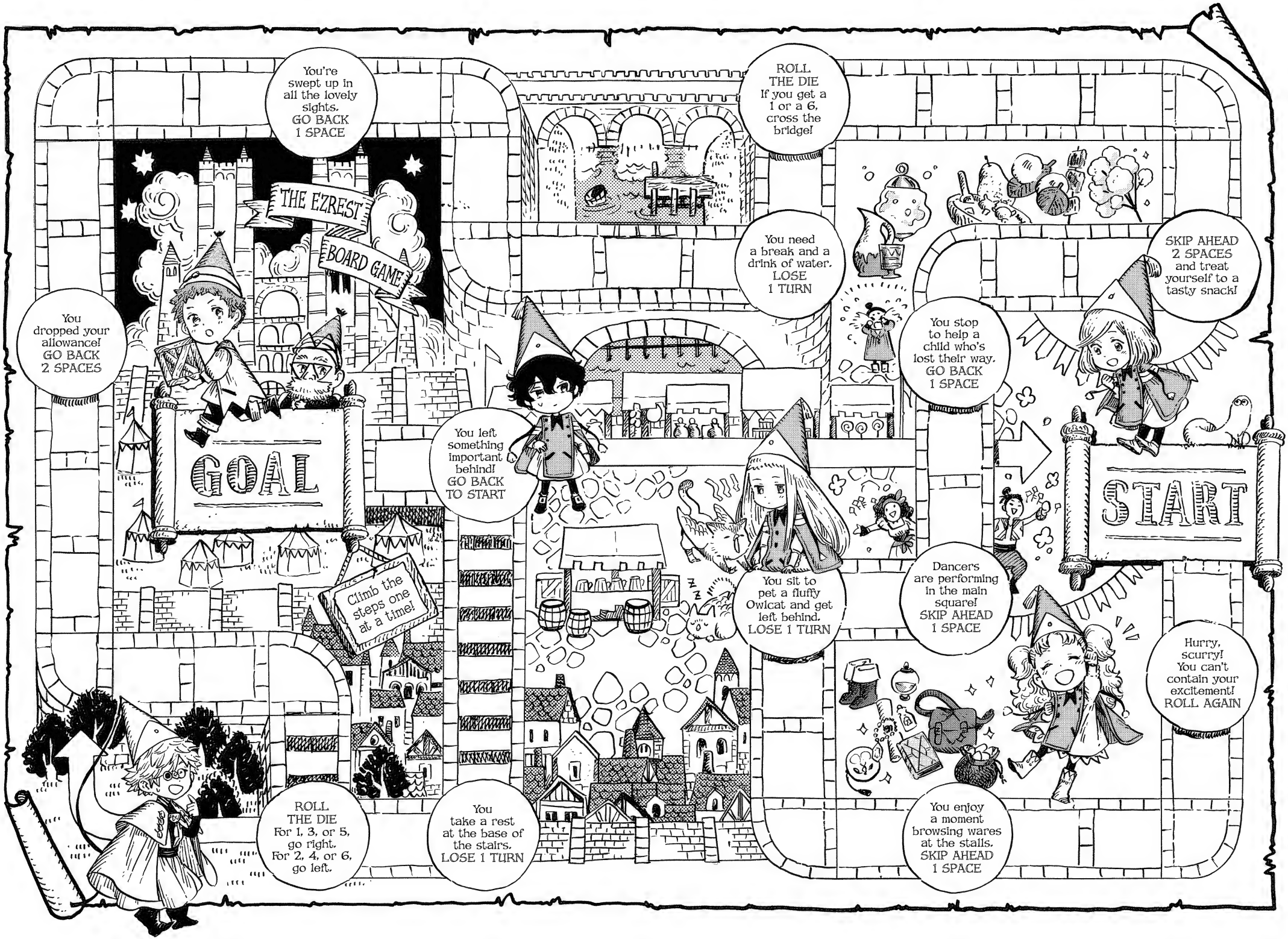
FIDGET
そわ

HOORAY!!

YOU'RE THE BEST, MASTER QIFREY!

...SO I SUPPOSE WE MIGHT AS WELL TAKE IN A FEW SIGHTS...

...ON OUR WAY TO MEET UP WITH TARTAH AND MISTER NOLNOA.


You're swept up in all the lovely sights. GO BACK 1 SPACE
THE EZREST BOARD GAME
You dropped your allowance! GO BACK 2 SPACES
GOAL
Climb the steps one at a time!
ROLL THE DIE For 1, 3, or 5, go right. For 2, 4, or 6, go left.
You left something important behind! GO BACK TO START
You take a rest at the base of the stairs. LOSE 1 TURN
ROLL THE DIE If you get a 1 or a 6, cross the bridge!
You need a break and a drink of water. LOSE 1 TURN
You sit to pet a fluffy Owlcat and get left behind. LOSE 1 TURN
You stop to help a child who's lost their way. GO BACK 1 SPACE
SKIP AHEAD 2 SPACES and treat yourself to a tasty snack!
START
Dancers are performing in the main square! SKIP AHEAD 1 SPACE
Hurry, scurry! You can't contain your excitement! ROLL AGAIN
You enjoy a moment browsing wares at the stalls. SKIP AHEAD 1 SPACE

PSST!
IS *THAT* WHO I THINK IT IS?
GLANCE
I HEAR HE USED TO STUDY UNDER A WISE ONE.
IS IT TRUE HE FLED THE HALL?
I THOUGHT THEY WERE JUST TALES...
...BUT LOOK, HE'S WEARING SPEC-TACLES!
THE WITCH EVERYONE TALKS ABOUT?
DO YOU THINK HE'S *REALLY* MISSING AN EYE?
...
MASTER QIFREY! OVER HERE!

...

EVERYWHERE I LOOK, THERE'S SOMETHING NEW, AND WONDERFUL, AND MYSTERIOUS TO SEE!

AND THE *SMELLS* AS WE WALKED PAST ALL THE STALLS! SWEET, SAVORY, AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN!

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN SO MANY PEOPLE ALL IN ONE PLACE?!

HAVING FUN?

YES! VERY MUCH SO!

OH! BUT...

...IS IT ALLOWED— FOR *ME* TO HAVE FUN?

LET YOURSELF BASK IN THE DAYS THAT ARE BRIGHT AND HAPPY. THAT APPLIES TO EVERYONE, WHICH INCLUDES YOU, TOO.

!

...

GO ON AND ENJOY YOURSELF, COCO.

WHY, OF COURSE.

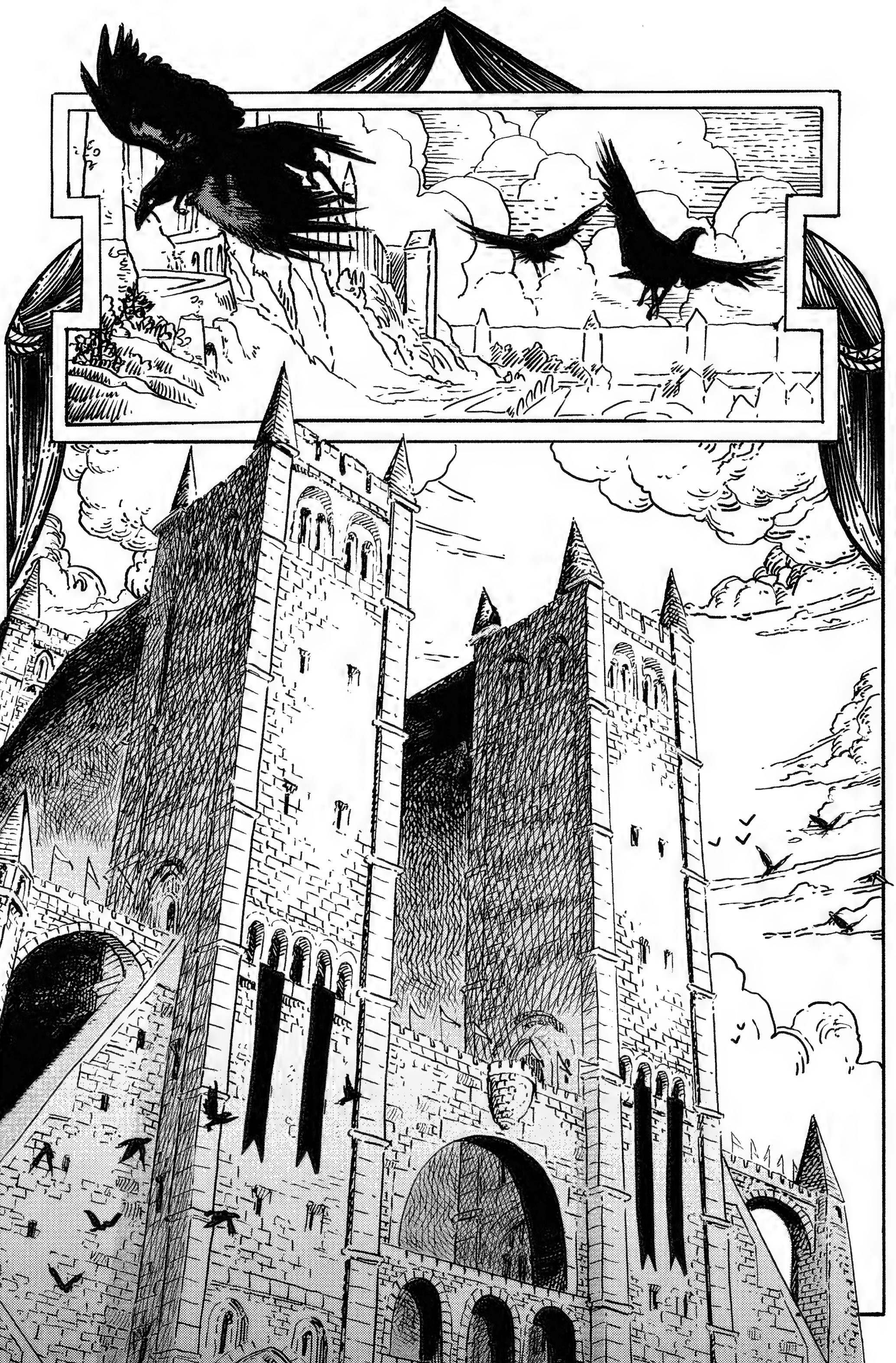
HURRY UP! YOU ***HAVE*** TO SEE THIS!

ARE YOU TWO COMING?!

IT'S SO AMAZING, COCO!

YOU'RE NOT GONNA BELIEVE IT!

SEE?! LOOK!



BEHOLD THE GLORY OF CASTLE EZREST...

...ROYAL SEAT OF KING EZREST...

...RULER OF THE ALLIED KINGDOMS OF THE PENINSULA, ZOZAH ESTUS.

LET US BE ON OUR WAY. I'M SURE TARTAH IS ANXIOUS TO KNOW OF OUR ARRIVAL.

COME ALONG, COCO.

YES, MASTER!

QIFREY, MY LAD! YOU FINALLY MADE IT!

OH! YOU'RE HERE!

I'M AFRAID THE CENTRAL SQUARE WAS A BIT INTENSE.

PUSHING OUR WAY THROUGH THE CROWD PROVED TO BE QUITE THE EXPERIENCE.

LEAPING LIONGOATS! YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A WINDSTORM!

HAHA...

FRAZZLE

WELL, YOU'D BEST BRACE YOURSELF...

'CAUSE TOMORROW, THINGS ARE GONNA GET *A WHOLE LOT LIVELIER!*

DEAR ME...

...AND IF YOU'D LIKE TO LOCK THE DOOR, JUST REMOVE THE KNOB ON THE OTHER SIDE.

USE THIS ONE HERE TO GET TO YOUR BEDROOM...

OH, IT LOOKS SO COZY!

OH, AND DEFINITELY REMEMBER THIS PATTERNED ONE. IT'S THE KNOB FOR THE BATH AND WASHROOM.

YOU CAN USE THIS KNOB TO ACCESS THE LUGGAGE ROOM.

I SHOULD BE THE ONE THANKING YOU ALL FOR OFFERING TO HELP!

IT'S VERY KIND OF YOU TO ALLOW US USE OF YOUR TENT, MISTER NOLNOA. THANK YOU.

ズッ SHF

PHEW. MADE IT JUST IN TIME.

I SEE THE CROWDS ARE AS MASSIVE AS EVER.

HM? AH, I'M AFRAID OLRUGGIO MAY BE A BIT—

SPEAKING OF WHICH, IS IT JUST THE FIVE OF YOU?

?!

HUH?!

WH-
WHO?!

SURE GLAD I GOT EVERY-THING DONE IN TIME TO HOP OVER TODAY.

WH-
WHAT?!

CUTTING IT CLOSE AS ALWAYS, OLD FRIEND.

MASTER OLLYYY?!

WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT? OF *COURSE* IT'S ME!

FWIP

FWIP

GLOAT-RUGGIO

THIS IS THE WORK OF MY LATEST CONTRAPTION. I CALL IT THE MAKEOVER MASK.

OH. Y-YOU SURPRISED ME, THAT'S ALL.

YOU SHAVED YOUR BEARD...!

WHO SAYS I SHAVED OFF MY BEARD?

SHWRRR

SHW

NO MATTER HOW WORN OUT YOU'RE FEELING...

...IT MAKES SURE EVERYONE ELSE SEES YOU LOOKING YOUR BEST. PRETTY SLICK, HUH?

TELL ME ABOUT IT. BUT THERE'S AN UPSIDE. WITH THE EXTRA HOURS I PUT IN...

...I FINALLY GOT MY SPELL FOR THE SILVER EVE PROCESSION LOOKING UP TO SNUFF.

EEK! LOOK AT THOSE BAGS UNDER HIS EYES!

OOF, IT'S MASTER OLLY LOOKING HIS *WORST.*

OLD-RUGGIO

AND WHEN YOU TAKE IT OFF...

SST

SHLUMP

...

...THERE'S A MATTER REGARDING THE PROCESSION I'D LIKE TO DISCUSS.

AH. THAT REMINDS ME. WHEN YOU HAVE A MOMENT...

I FIGURE AT THE VERY LEAST, I OUGHTA MAKE AN APPEARANCE...

ONE OF MY NOBLE PATRONS IS HOSTING A BANQUET.

HM?

SURE. AFTER I GET BACK.

WHAT ARE YOU, MY DAD?

Honestly!

YOU'RE RUNNING ON NO SLEEP! LIQUOR IS THE *LAST* THING YOU NEED!

WHEN YOU GET TO THAT PARTY, I EXPECT YOU TO DRINK *WATER*, AND LOTS OF IT.

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

WOOHOO!

...AND MAYBE GRAB JUST *ONE* DRINK WHILE I'M THERE.

Fancy party equals fancy booze!

BESIDES, I CAN'T WALK INTO CASTLE EZREST LOOKING LIKE *THIS.*

YOU DON'T PRESENT YOURSELF BEFORE THE ROYAL FAMILY WITHOUT FORMAL ATTIRE. AND FORGET ABOUT THE MASK.

A BANQUET WITH *ROYALTY!* OH, IT SOUNDS SO LOVELY!

NO.

MY PATRON HAS A PRIVATE VILLA.

IS IT BEING HELD IN THAT HUGE CASTLE IN THE CENTER OF TOWN?

...IS THAT THE MASK WOULDN'T EVEN MAKE IT INSIDE.

WHAT YOU GIRLS MAY NOT REALIZE...

HEY.

...CONSIDERING HOW YOU *USUALLY* LOOK, I'M SURPRISED YOU'D EVER *WANT* TO TAKE IT OFF.

GEE, MASTER OLLY...

HUH?

EVEN CONTRAPTIONS ARE PUSHED AWAY AT THE THRESHOLD.

...THAT PREVENTS ANY OTHER FROM BEING CAST INSIDE.

...THE CASTLE ITSELF IS GUARDED BY A SPELL...

FOR YOU SEE...

A CASTLE FOR A KING...

...WITHOUT ANY MAGIC WHATSO-EVER?

ZNSH

ガ!!!

UGH. DOESN'T MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I STEP FOOT IN THIS CASTLE. IT ALWAYS PUTS ME ON EDGE.

DO NOT FALL PREY TO UNEASE, UTOWIN.

YOU'RE ON CONSTANT ALERT, ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT WHAT COULD HAPPEN...

...AND HOW YOU'RE GONNA HANDLE IT WITHOUT MAGIC. IT JUST STARTS TO *GET* TO YOU, Y'KNOW?

STAND TALL, KNOWING THESE HALLS POSE NO THREAT YOU CANNOT HANDLE.

YOUR SKILL WITH THE SPEAR IS EXCEPTIONAL, MAGIC OR NONE.

STILL... WE DON'T EVEN HAVE OUR SYLPH SHOES.

HIGH PRAISE, COMING FROM YOU. FILLS MY THIMBLE OF SELF-RESPECT RIGHT BACK UP.

CREEAK

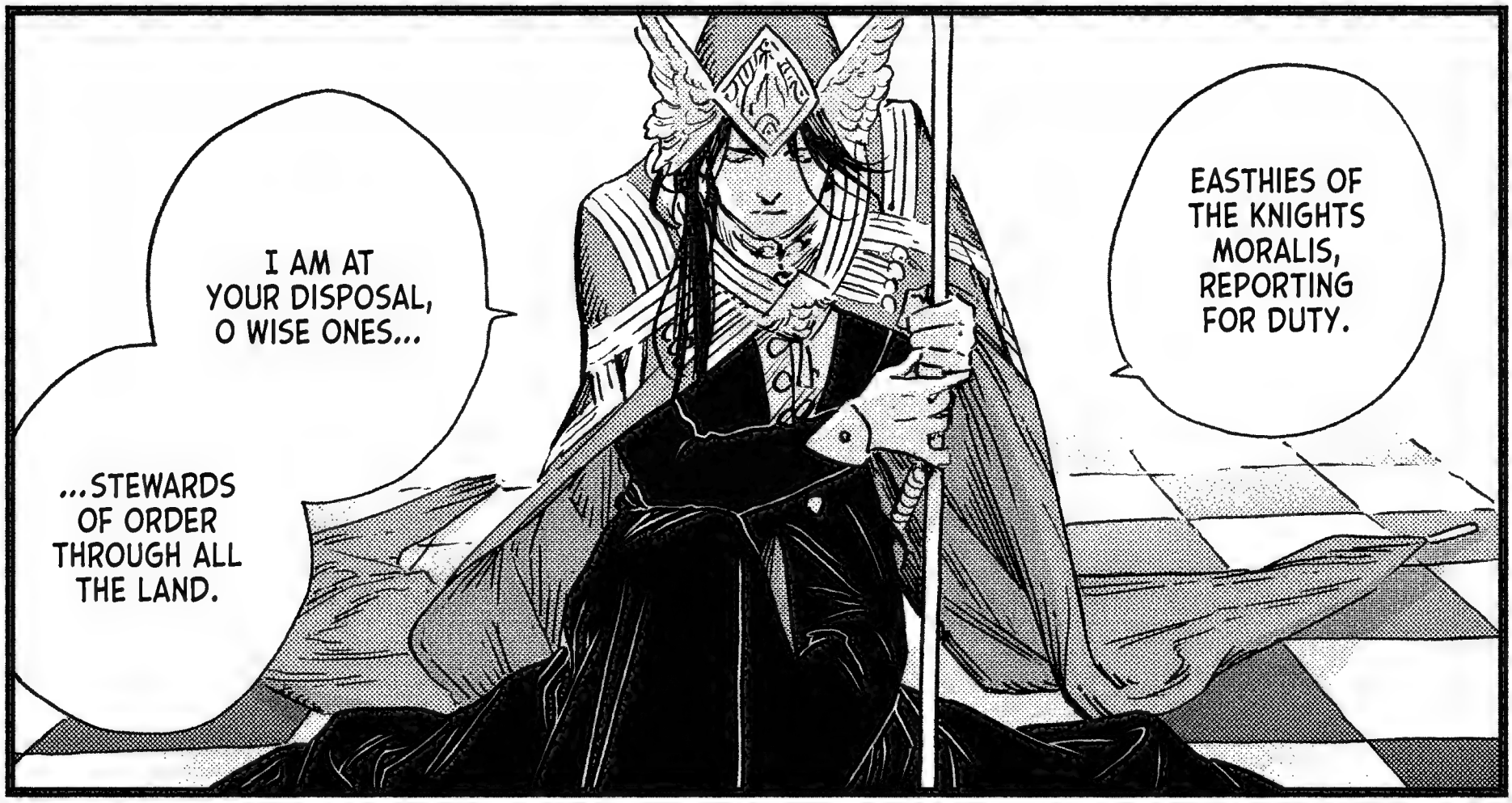
TEEAK

RIGHT, GUYS?

I MEAN, IT CAN'T ONLY BE ME.

...THEN REST ASSURED, THE THREE WHO AWAIT US MUST FEEL DOUBLY SO.

IF THESE WALLS TRULY LEAVE YOU SO UNNERVED...


I AM AT YOUR DISPOSAL, O WISE ONES...
...STEWARDS OF ORDER THROUGH ALL THE LAND.
EASTHIES OF THE KNIGHTS MORALIS, REPORTING FOR DUTY.

Chapter 48

I AM AT YOUR DISPOSAL, O WISE ONES...

...STEWARDS OF ORDER THROUGH ALL THE LAND.

GWIP

...

ユ LEAN

KER

FWK

FWSH

FWSH

FWSH

FWSH

THAP!!

!!

STAGGER

THRUMP!

"DOUBLY UNNERVED," ARE WE?

ARE YOU QUITE CERTAIN OF THAT?

NEXT TIME...

...PAY MIND TO WHOSE EARS MAY BE WAITING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR.

I'D HAVE HOPED I TAUGHT MY DARLING APPRENTICE BETTER.

PWAF

はぁ

PWAF

はぁ

ふぅ

HAAAH

はぁ…

HUP

ア!!

YES, CAPTAIN VINANNA.

I SHALL TAKE THE LESSON TO HEART.

HAH! FORGIVE ME.

I WOULD BE OBLIGED IF YOU COULD SET A BETTER EXAMPLE FOR MY SUBORDINATES.

HOWEVER, I AM FORCED TO WONDER WHAT MESSAGE IT SENDS WHEN MEMBERS OF THE ORDER ATTACK OTHERS ON SIGHT.

GLANCE

I MEANT NO HARM.

THE OPPORTUNITY WAS SIMPLY TOO GOOD TO PASS UP.

*AH. IT WAS A **DEMON-STRATION.***

OF COURSE.

GULP

NOT TO WORRY. ENSURING THEY *DON'T* IS PRECISELY WHY I AM HERE.

IT WOULDN'T DO MUCH TO HAVE THEIR HIGHNESSES...

...BELIEVING WE'LL BE BEATEN INTO SUBMISSION JUST BECAUSE WE LACK ACCESS TO OUR SPELLS.

FORGIVE ME. WE HAVE NOT MET.

I AM LAGRAH, NEWLY SUCCEEDED TO THE TITLE OF WISE IN FRIEND-SHIP.

AND YOU, SIR, ARE...?

BEAM

...TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, SIR EASTHIES.

I AM MOST HONORED...

THIS IS AN OUTRAGE!

WHY IS THIS THE FIRST WE'RE HEARING OF LORD ENGENDALE'S RESIGNATION?!

WHAM

YOU WERE TO PROVIDE US AMPLE NOTICE!

WE WILL NOT STAND FOR THIS, WITCHES!

STAND FOR IT OR NOT, MAJESTY, IT IS DONE.

KA-

I-IT NEEDN'T BE WRITTEN IN ANY TREATY.

THINK!

IT IS A MATTER OF COMMON COURTESY!

Hrm...

AND I DO NOT RECALL ANY FORMAL OBLIGATION ON OUR PART TO INFORM YOU OF OUR APPOINTMENTS.

THIS IS THE SEASON IN WHICH YOUR POWERS ARE NEEDED MOST, WITCHES! THINK OF THE HARD FROSTS! THE ICE!

THE PASSAGE STARS MARK THE HARVEST SEASON...

...AND SILVER EVE HERALDS THE BEGINNING OF SNOWFALL.

YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH THE FIVE KINGDOMS AND SEEK FINAL APPROVAL FROM HIS MAJESTY, HIGH RULER OF THE ZOZAH ESTUS!

AND YOU CHOOSE *NOW* OF ALL TIMES TO BRING IN A NEW WISE OF FRIEND-SHIP?! WE NEED AN *EXPERIENCED* HAND COORDINATING AID DISPATCHED TO OUR CITIES!

IT'S PREPOSTEROUS! A DECISION OF THIS MAGNITUDE DEMANDS COUNSEL!

RULER OF THE TREES, IN MISTGROVE AT WATER'S EDGE...

RULER OF THE STONES, AT MUDROCK CANYON...

RULER OF THE FIELDS, PURVEYOR OF THE GOLDEN PLAINS...

RULER OF THE FLOCKS, HAILING FROM THE HIGHLAND PASTURES...

RULER OF THE SEA, SEATED IN THE DRAGONPASS ISLES...

AND THE SUPREME MONARCH OF ZOZAH HIMSELF, UNDER WHOM THE FIVE KINGDOMS STAND UNITED...

WE DO NOT ALIGN WITH ANY OF THE PENINSULA'S NATIONS.

US WITCHES ARE BOUND TO NONE OF THE ABOVE. OUR AFFAIRS ARE OUR OWN.

WE EXIST ONLY TO ANSWER THE CALLS OF THE COMMON PEOPLE.

THINK OF US AS MESSENGERS FROM THE HEAVENS.

WE HAVE NO COUNTRY. WE BEAR NO FLAG.

NOT TO BE TOO BOLD...

...BUT I HAVE TO WONDER IF YOU AREN'T MORE CONCERNED WITH THE CLINKING OF COINS.

TAP

THE CALLS OF THE PEOPLE...

HOW QUAINT.

I SEEM TO RECALL THAT THE ONLY REASON WE BENEFIT FROM YOUR SERVICES...

...IS BECAUSE OF THE *ENORMOUS* SPELLCASTING LEVIES WE CONTINUE TO PAY.

...

YOU DO REALIZE OUR NATIONS ARE BESET BY MANY OTHER TROUBLES, NO? MAGIC WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL IN DRIVING OFF BRIGANDS AND PIRATES.

DROUGHTS. HEAVY RAINS AND SNOW. VOLCANOES. THAT SORT OF THING.

AND YET, FOR *ALL* THAT MONEY, OUR CALLS FOR AID ARE ANSWERED ONLY FOR CATASTROPHES OF THE *NATURAL* VARIETY.

...OF AIDING OTHERS, NO?

AND SURELY, SUCH DEEDS ALSO FALL UNDER THE SCOPE...

AFTER ALL, THEY SAY A SINGLE WITCH HAS THE STRENGTH OF *A HUNDRED SOLDIERS.*

HOW EASILY YOU TURN YOUR BACKS ON OTHERS.

ALL ACROSS THE PENINSULA, THE *COMMON PEOPLE* SUFFER THE BRIGANDS' RAIDS.

WE DO NOT INTERVENE IN CALAMITIES WROUGHT BY MAN.

ABSO-LUTELY NOT.

ALL THAT POWER AND ***SO*** CHOOSY ABOUT WHEN TO SHARE IT.

A PITY.

WHO DO YOU THINK PAYS FOR YOU TO LIVE IN LUXURY IN YOUR MAGIC CASTLE... YOUR *GREAT HALL* AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA?!

IT'S THE BACKS OF THE FIVE KINGDOMS' PEOPLE ON WHOM YOU—

WHAM

IT'S PURE CONCEIT, IS WHAT IT IS!

ENOUGH.

THEY RALLY BEHIND NO *KING* SO THEIR POWER MAY NOT SERVE AS WEAPON UNDER ANY BANNER.

THEY CLAIM NO LAND AS THEIR OWN BECAUSE THEY HAVE EQUAL LOVE FOR ALL PARTS OF OUR WORLD.

THE WITCHES ALIGN WITH NO NATION THAT THEY MIGHT EXTEND AID FAIRLY TO ALL.

PLEASE EXCUSE MY COMPATRIOTS' LACK OF DECORUM...

...O WISE AND COMPASSIONATE NEIGHBORS.

SUCH A DREADFULLY LONG NAME, DON'T YOU THINK?

PLEASE, LORD LAGRAH THE WISE. "DEAN" WILL SUFFICE. CONSIDER IT A SYMBOL OF A NEW *FRIENDSHIP*.

YOUR MAJESTY. KING DEANRELDY OF THE PENINSULA, I PRESUME.

CLATTER

WE HAVE YOU TO THANK THAT ALL OF ESTUS ENJOYS QUIET CALM.

NO ONE HERE DOUBTS THE GREAT DEBT WE OWE TO YOU AND YOUR MAGIC.

ALLOW ME TO APOLOGIZE ONCE MORE. HARVESTS FROM THE GOLDEN PLAINS HAVE BEEN POOR THESE PAST YEARS.

SURELY YOU CAN SEE WHY WE FIND SNOWFALL'S APPROACH SO CONCERNING.

GULP

...

L!! ...STAAARE

...THAT WE LIVE WITHOUT FEAR AND CELEBRATE THIS GRAND FESTIVAL EACH YEAR...

THAT WE DO NOT GO HUNGRY OR SHIVER WITH COLD...

IF NOT FOR YOUR AID, WE WOULD HAVE NONE OF THIS.

PLEASE CONTINUE TO LEND US YOUR WISDOM AND STRENGTH, THAT WE MIGHT STAND READY...

...IN THE FACE OF CALAMITIES WROUGHT NOT BY FOES, BUT BY CIRCUMSTANCE COMMON TO ALL.

BUT OF COURSE, YOUR MAJES— *KING DEAN.*

MAY OUR PATHS BE ALWAYS INTERTWINED!

MAY OUR PATHS BE ALWAYS INTERTWINED.

...TO STEER THE CONVERSATION FROM THE FIVE KINGDOMS' COMPLAINTS.

TO THINK HE'D PULL OUT TALK OF SNOWFALL...

OH, THAT COUNFOUNDED DEANRELDY!

FWUMP

"CALAMITIES WROUGHT NOT BY FOES." THE MAN HAS A SILVER TONGUE.

THE NEW WISE IN FRIENDSHIPS MUST STAND FIRM.

WE'RE COUNTING ON YOU, LAGRAH.

HE'S QUITE THE STRATEGIST.

NOW WE'LL FIND OURSELVES HARD-PRESSED TO REFUSE ADDITIONAL CALLS FOR AID IN THE COMING SEASON.

HE BACKED ME INTO A CORNER. I WAS CERTAINLY IN NO SPOT TO REFUSE THE CLASP OF COVENANT.

N-NEW WISE IN FRIEND-SHIPS...?

THAT TITLE IS *MINE!* DOES MY OWN ASSISTANT MEAN TO USURP ME?!

GRR!

LAGRAH, YOU TRAITOR! HOW COULD YOU?!

WE KNOW OF YOUR MISDEEDS. FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW, YOU'VE AGREED TO QUITE THE RANGE OF UNNECESSARY REQUESTS.

AND WE HAVE THE EVIDENCE TO PROVE IT.

CLAM IT, LORD ENGENDALE. YOU BROUGHT THIS ON YOURSELF.

DID YOU HONESTLY EXPECT TO GET AWAY WITH IT?

IT SICKENS ME THAT ONE OF THE WISE WOULD FALL SO LOW.

COUNT-LESS NOBLE RESIDENCES FITTED WITH LAVISH ADORNMENT...

SCORES OF DRAGONS CAUGHT FOR PRIVATE MENAGERIES...

YOU MUST HAVE LINED YOUR POCKETS WELL WITH ALL THE FRIVOLOUS PERSONAL FAVORS YOU ARRANGED.

MY APOLOGIES.

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT SEEMED PRUDENT TO APPREHEND HIM HERE, WHERE MAGIC IS NOT A CONCERN.

WITH PLEA-SURE.

IT'S TIME HE AND I HAD A *VERY* THOROUGH CHAT.

BRING HIM, UTOWIN.

ZLRR ズル ZLR ズル ZLR ズル

BUT YOU DO MEAN TO WIPE HIS MIND ONCE THE INTER-ROGATION IS COMPLETE?

WE STOOD TO LOSE FAR TOO MUCH...

...GOING ABOUT IT IN THE *TRADITIONAL* MANNER.

Hm! Hm!

NEED YOU ASK?

I MERELY DID THE RIGHT THING.

WE OWE YOU MUCH FOR BRINGING HIS ACTIONS TO LIGHT.

THERE IS NO ROOM FOR IMPROPRIETY.

AS WITCHES, WE MUST BE MODELS OF RECTITUDE.

THE RIGHT THING... YES...

IF WE DESIRE NEVER TO BE CONQUERED...

...WE MUST SEEK NEVER TO SUBJUGATE.

WE MUST LABOR ALWAYS TO THE BENEFIT OF OTHERS...

...EXERCISING OUR ART FOR THE GREATER GOOD.

THIS IS HOW WE MUST PRESENT OURSELVES...

...FOR IF WE DO NOT...

...WE STAND TO LOSE IT ALL.

THE BEAUTY YOU OBSERVE BELOW WILL BE GONE—AND THIS TIME, I FEAR IT WILL BE FOREVER-MORE.

THE STARS PASS OVER-HEAD...

THE STARS PASS OVERHEAD, SILVER SHIPS IN SLEEPING SKIES.

MASTER ALAIRA! LOOK! UP IN THE SKY!

HM?

...VESSELS TO OUR PRIVATE ASPIRATIONS.

MY, MY... SILVER EVE ALREADY, IS IT?

SHWRSH

MORE PASSAGE STARS!

HOW DO YOU FARE?

ARE YOU FINDING THEM ANY LESS TAXING?

THE PATHS THEY TRACE NOW INTER-TWINE...

YOU MAY FLY IF YOU ARE WEARY.

EZREST IS NOT FAR NOW.

I'LL *WALK.*

NO...

AND AS THE DAWN BEGINS TO SHINE...

...THEIR FESTIVAL HEADS TO ITS PRIME.

WOOOW ...!

THEY'RE HERE FOR THE OPENING PARADE!

WE'RE GONNA SEE THE KING AND HIS KNIGHTS MARCH PAST!

LOOK AT ALL THESE PEOPLE!

THE KING? 'FRAID YOU'RE A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT.

?!

LOOK! ISN'T THAT MISS LULUCI?

I'M *SORRY*, OKAY?

IF YOU HADN'T SLEPT IN, WE WOULD'VE BEEN HERE IN TIME!

SHAKE

SHAKE

WE ***MISSED*** THEM?! MASTER OLLY, HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?! I WANTED TO SEE THE WHISKERCATS!

MROOOW?

SHRWRSH

IT'S THE ORDER'S PENNANT DANCE!

!

COCO!

COCO, COME ON!

GASP

...

...

OH! THANKS, TARTAH!

WE GOTTA GET BACK TO THE TENT! AFTER THE PARADE, THE STREETS'LL BE TOO PACKED TO PUSH OUR WAY THROUGH.

OKAY!

S-SURE THING. JUST STICK CLOSE AND DON'T GET LOST, OKAY?!

THRUST

Oh, geez!

ERP...!

What am I doing?!

I almost held her hand!

GLUG GLUG
ゴ ゴ

FIRST, I THINK YOU'LL ENJOY SEEING HOW OUR TENT TURNED OUT.

I'M SURE WE'LL HAVE TIME TO PERUSE THE DISPLAYS *LATER.*

MAGIC, MAGIC, WHEREVER YOU LOOK! OH, THIS IS ***SO*** MUCH FUN!

THE STARRY SWORD MAGIC STATIONER'S SILVER EVE POP-UP SHOP

AND LOOK! WE ALREADY HAVE OUR FIRST CUSTOMER!

OH, WOW!

MY APOLOGIES, BUT YOU HAVEN'T SEEN A YOUNG BOY RUNNING AROUND, HAVE YOU?

HE'D BE RIGHT AROUND THIS GIRL'S AGE AND CLAD IN A COPPER-INDIGO CLOAK.

POING

AWW... IT WASN'T A CUSTOMER?

?

I WONDER WHAT THAT'S ABOUT.

I SEE...

NO. CAN'T SAY THAT I HAVE.

IF YOU DO SPOT HIM, THE CASTLE GUARD WOULD BE OBLIGED TO HEAR OF IT.

SORRY TO DISTURB YOU.

NO. NO REPORTS OF HIM IN THIS AREA, EITHER.

ANY SIGN?

HAH! IF ANYTHING, THESE ARE THE YEARS I'D EXPECT IT MOST. DIDN'T YOU EVER DREAM THE SAME?

YOU'D THINK BY HIS AGE, HE'D KNOW HOW TO CONDUCT HIMSELF LIKE A PRINCE!

THE LITTLE RASCAL. HE DOES THIS EVERY SILVER EVE.

SLINK

EVENTUALLY HE'LL GROW OUT OF IT. WE ALL DO.

FRMP
もぞ"
もぞ"
FRMP

EVERYONE KNOWS YOU CAN'T *BECOME* A WITCH.

Witch Hat Atelier

Content Warning: The following chapter includes discussion of sexual abuse and victim blaming. Readers likely to find such subject matter triggering should proceed with caution. Alternately, this chapter may be skipped entirely; doing so will not interfere with understanding of the main plot, which resumes from page 121.

Chapter 49

THOSE ARE KNIGHTS OF THE CROWN, ARE THEY NOT?

SURE ARE. WONDER WHAT'S GOT THEM IN SUCH A RUSH?

BUSTLE

HUSTLE

NOT THAT WE'RE ANY BETTER OFF. THIS DAY'S GONNA BE A REAL DOOZY.

DDD

...OFF?

WE DON'T EVEN GET HALF A CLOCK MARK TO ENJOY THE FESTIVITIES OR TAKE A LOAD...

TROT TROT TROT

STRAIGHT OUT OF THE PENNANT DANCE AND ONTO PATROL.

HAAAAAH

ARE YOU *KIDDING* ME? SINCE WHEN DOES GALGA HAVE A LIFE *OUTSIDE* OF WORK?! LUCKY DUCK!

Partner?

Partner?

FINISHED MY SHIFT. I'M OFF-DUTY.

Whuh? Galga?! Why don't you have your uniform on?!

GONNA GO ENJOY THE FESTIVAL WITH MY PARTNER.

KEEP AN EYE ON THINGS FOR ME.

HEH...

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S GOT A DATE. HOW DOES ONE OF THE KNIGHTS MORALIS MANAGE *THAT?*

Haaah...

I'd wager his gentle personality helps.

?

I'M NOT SURE WHY MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORDER SHOULD PRECLUDE ROMANTIC ATTACHMENT.

OH, LIKE YOU'VE NEVER HAD A CRUSH VANISH INTO THE ETHER THE MOMENT THEY HEARD WHAT YOU DO FOR A LIVING?

SEE? NOBODY WANTS *ANYTHING* TO DO WITH US.

SHWIP

STAAARE

SEEMS PRETTY CLEAR TO ME WHY THE ORDER ISN'T A PARTICULARLY *POPULAR* BUNCH.

IF NORMAL WITCHES DO THE DRAWING, WE'RE IN CHARGE OF WIPING THE SLATE.

BE WE SHUNNED OR OUR LABORS THANKLESS...

...THE KNIGHTS MORALIS STILL SERVE A VITAL ROLE.

AND IF YOU ASK ME, IT'S BETTER THIS WAY. OUR JOB'S ALL THE EASIER.

I'D RATHER SOCIETY SHOW A HEALTHY RESPECT FOR THE SERVICE WE PROVIDE. FAR PREFERABLE TO CLOYING FAMILIARITY.

RIIIGHT...

NOW I'M REMEMBERING *WHY* YOU ENDED UP IN OUR RANKS IN THE FIRST PL—

LADY LULUCI! SIR UTOWIN!

IS THERE TROUBLE?

JUST TELL US WHERE TO HEAD.

ILLICIT CONTRAPTIONS FOR SALE! ALONG THE CASTLE WALL, NEAR THE SOUTH GATE!

EKOH AND ETLAN ARE ALREADY IN PURSUIT!

OH, AND WHAT KIND OF CON-TRAPTIONS?

WE'RE ON OUR WAY.

TH-THE NATURE OF THE DEVICE IS RATHER, ERM...

GLANCE チラッ

TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP TMP

BLAST IT! BLAST IT ALL!

FWOOOSH

DON'T YOU BRATS *EVER* GIVE UP?!

I AIN'T DOIN' ANYTHING ***FORBIDDEN.*** LEMME GO ALREADY!

I ***KNOW,*** EKOH! IT'S AN *ILLICIT CONTRAP-TION!*

HEAR THAT, ETLAN? HE SAYS IT'S NOT FORBIDDEN MAGIC!

AND THAT *LOSER* IS TRYING TO SELL HIS ROTTEN DOOHICKEY IN SECRET.

THAT'S WHY WE'VE GOTTA CATCH HIM!

OHHH! NOW I GET IT! THANKS FOR THE EXPLANATION!

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN EVERYTHING WE'VE STUDIED?!

A SPELL CAN STILL CAUSE INDIRECT HARM, EVEN IF IT'S NOT CAST DIRECTLY ON THE VICTIM.

YOU CAN FLY AND YOU CAN RUN, BUT IN THE END *YOU'RE DONE!*

SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST SAVE US ALL SOME TROUBLE?!

KA

BWUFF

FWOOM

FWIRP

THANKS, BUT I'LL PASS!

GOOD THING I FLICKED SOME LAPESS JUICE ONTO HIS CLOAK.

WE'LL POP THE FRUIT INTO THE GUIDANCE ORB AND TRACK HIM RIGHT DOWN.

HMPH. AN ESCAPE ROUTE, HUH? PRETTY STANDARD PLAY FOR A BLACK MARKET PEDDLER.

WHAT NOW, ETLAN? HE'S FLED TO THE UNDERCITY!

THAT CONTRAP-TION OF HIS IS REAL SCUMMY, LULUCI!

YOU DON'T WANNA GO ANYWHERE NEAR THAT GUY, LULUCI!

HEY!

I'LL TAKE THAT, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

SNAP

YEAH... I MEAN, I WOULD, BUT...

UTOWIN! YOU GOTTA STOP HER!

I DOUBT THERE'S ANY FORCE IN THE WORLD THAT COULD HOLD HER BACK NOW.

HFF...

HFF...

HFF...

WIPE OUT THE GOODS, AND IT WON'T MATTER IF I'M CAUGHT. I'LL TELL 'EM THEY'VE GOT THE WRONG GUY.

BETTER HURRY UP AND ALTER THE SEAL TO DESTROY THE EVIDENCE.

UGH. GUESS I DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE.

BLASTED ORDER... HOW'D THEY CATCH WIND?

DID ONE OF MY SCHEDULED CUSTOMERS RAT ME OUT?

I WAS GONNA CALL 'EM MY GARMENTGLIMPSE GLASSES.

HAAAH... REAL PITY. THIS WAS SOME OF MY BEST WORK YET.

OOH, YEAH! CHECK *THOSE* OUT!

DARN KNIGHTS CAN'T ADMIT THEY LIKE THIS STUFF JUST AS MUCH AS THE NEXT GUY!

GRIPE

BUNCHA PRISSY, UPTIGHT *PRUDES!*

GRIPE

NOT TO MENTION ALL THE COIN THESE WOULD'VE FETCHED.

GRIPE

WHAT A WASTE OF QUALITY CRAFTS-MANSHIP.

M-MAYBE I'LL JUST TAKE *ONE* MORE PEEP...

GLANCE

GLANCE

SWIP

ON AUTHORITY OF THE KNIGHTS MORALIS, YOU ARE HEREBY CHARGED WITH THE CREATION AND POSSESSION OF A SMALL, ILLICIT CONTRAPTION...

...DESIGNED TO VISUALLY PENETRATE GARMENTS OF UNSUSPECTING VICTIMS, AND FOR ATTEMPTING TO EVADE ARREST.

AS PUNISHMENT, YOU WILL NOW BE STRIPPED OF YOUR MEMORIES.

IT'S NOT LIKE I'VE *KILLED* ANYONE! THE SPELL'S NOT EVEN *FORBIDDEN!*

WH...? IS THIS SOME KIND OF JOKE? YOU'RE GONNA WIPE MY MIND FOR *THIS*?!

IT IS TO BE HANDLED WITH THE SAME GRAVITY AS ANY OTHER SERIOUS OFFENSE.

PEEPING IS SEXUAL ASSAULT, PLAIN AND SIMPLE.

WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM? WHY ARE YOU MAKING SUCH A BIG DEAL OUT OF THIS?!

SO SOMEONE SNEAKS A QUICK PEEK! IT'S NOT LIKE IT DOES ANY HARM!

D-DON'T YOU HAVE BIGGER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT? THERE ARE *WAY* WORSE CRIMES!

LULUCI! ERYENNE!

GOOD NEWS!

A SPECIAL OPPOR-TUNITY HAS JUST COME UP.

NOW, NORMALLY APPRENTICES AREN'T PERMITTED TO HANDLE REQUESTS OUTSIDE THE GREAT HALL WITHOUT SUPERVISION...

...BUT THE LORD OF THIS REGION'S CASTLE HAS GENEROUSLY OFFERED TO ENTRUST YOU WITH A JOB.

THIS IS A CHANCE FOR SOME REAL HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE. YOU'RE BOTH VERY LUCKY!

I KNOW I CAN COUNT ON YOU TO TREAT OUR PATRON WITH THE *UTMOST* RESPECT.

YES! LET'S BE SURE TO DO OUR VERY BEST!

ISN'T THIS EXCITING? IT'S LIKE WE'RE ALL GROWN UP! WE'LL BE FULL-FLEDGED WITCHES FOR A DAY!

NO!!

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HERE TO CAST.

FWIP

FWUMP

YANK

LET GO OF ME!!

YANK

SO WHY IS THAT MAN ALWAYS GETTING SO **CLOSE** TO US?

WORST OF ALL IS THE WAY HE'S ALWAYS **GRABBING** AT US.

HE'S ALWAYS **STARING** ...

...OR LEANING OVER OUR SHOULDERS, TRYING TO SMELL OUR HAIR.

LULUCI...

Hff...

PLIP

じぉ...

Hff...

I'M SCARED. I NEED TO FIND OUR MASTER AND TELL HIM WHAT'S—

B-DMP

I HATE IT.

I HATE IT.

B-DMP

B-DMP

I HATE IT, I HATE IT, I HATE IT...!

PLEASE.

DON'T GO.

DON'T LEAVE ME HERE ALONE.

DON'T GO!

I CAN'T ABAN-DON HER.

BUT I SHOULD HURRY AND GET HELP!

NO! THE MOMENT I LET THAT DOOR CLOSE, IT'S ALL OVER!

IF I GO, EVEN FOR A MOMENT, IT'LL JUST BE ERYENNE AND HIM.

I WANT TO RUN.

BUT I MUSTN'T. SHE **NEEDS** ME!

ERYENNE ...

TAKE COVER.

VWRMMM

GET *DOWN!*

LULUCI?

BWOOOM

?!

HE'S BEGUN TO SUSPECT YOU WERE OVERWHELMED BY THE JOB...

...AND DECIDED TO MAKE UP THIS PREPOSTEROUS STORY TO DRAW ATTENTION AWAY FROM THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK!

WH...?!

...TELLS ME HE SIMPLY HAPPENED TO BUMP INTO YOU ONCE OR TWICE...

...ONLY FOR YOU TO RESPOND WITH THAT EXCESSIVE DISPLAY OF FORCE. HE'S QUITE BEWILDERED, REALLY.

COME ON, LULUCI.

THERE'S NO NEED TO RESORT TO NAME CALLING.

THERE IS *NO WAY* I AM APOLO-GIZING TO THAT *PERVERT!*

HE'S THE ONE MAKING UP STORIES!

HE'S LYING!

HOWEVER, HE'S BEEN GRACIOUS ENOUGH TO SUGGEST THAT IF YOU SIMPLY APOLOGIZE FOR YOUR BEHAVIOR—

I WILL *NOT* BE SILENT!!

SHUSH!!

I WILL *NOT* KEEP QUIET!

IF YOU'D JUST CALM DOWN...

...KEEP QUIET, AND LISTEN—

WHY SHOULD *WE* BE THE ONES TO APOLOGIZE?!

WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO MAKE THIS GO AWAY?

WHY ARE YOU PRETENDING THIS IS *OUR* FAULT?

IT'S THE FACT THAT YOU ATTACKED AND INJURED ONE OF OUR VALUED PATRONS!

WHATEVER HE DID TO YOU ISN'T THE ISSUE!

AND WHY WON'T YOU *BELIEVE* US?

YOU'RE TAKING *HIS* SIDE, AND IT MAKES YOU JUST AS BAD AS—

THAT IS ***ENOUGH!***

THE MOMENT WE GET BACK TO THE GREAT HALL, I'M TAKING YOU STRAIGHT TO THE KNIGHTS MORALIS. MAYBE *THAT* WILL TEACH YOU!

IF YOU CAN'T ACCEPT HIS INCREDIBLY GRACIOUS OFFER TO FORGET ALL ABOUT THIS IN EXCHANGE FOR ONE TINY APOLOGY, THEN YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE.

UGH! SO THE GUY GETS A LITTLE HANDSY SOMETIMES. IT'S NOT LIKE IT DOES ANY HARM! WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

...

IT'LL BE OKAY, LULUCI...

WAVER

THE PROBLEM HERE IS *YOU.*

YOU'RE THE PROBLEM HERE, LULUCI.

QUIT BEING SUCH A [illegible].

IT *DOES* CAUSE HARM.

IT CHIPS AWAY AT YOUR VICTIMS UNTIL THEY CRUMBLE TO NOTHING.

IT DE-HUMAN-IZES.

IT STEALS AWAY THEIR RIGHT TO DAYS FREE FROM WORRY.

IT SHATTERS THEIR FAITH IN WITCHES AND EVERYTHING WE STAND FOR IN OUR SOCIETY.

AND NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE *WEIGHT* OF YOUR CRIMES...

...MAY THE PRINCIPLES BE EVER UPHELD, AND THE PENNANT'S—

SHRIIIP

UWAHAHA! A FEW MINOR ADJUSTMENTS, AND MY SPELL TO SEE THROUGH CLOTHING...

...WILL NOW RIP IT TO SHREDS!

FLASH

WHUNK

NGRK!

YOUR PRECIOUS CAPTURE PENNANT CAN'T SAVE YOU NOW!

LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKE BEING UNDRESSED FOR *REAL!*

...THEN YOU ARE SORELY MISTAKEN.

IF YOU BELIEVE US RELIANT ON THE PENNANTS ALONE...

EVERY SO OFTEN, UNSAVORY MINDS GROW BOLD AND CONTRAPTIONS SUCH AS HIS POP UP FOR SALE.

FWUMF.

SLUMP

FINE WORK AS ALWAYS, LULUCI.

OUR PER-PETRATOR NEVER HAD A CHANCE.

ANY RED-BLOODED MALE CAN SEE...

...THAT I'M JUST FILLIN' A NEED. PROVIDIN' AN OUTLET!

WHAT GIVES?! YOU'RE A *MAN*, AREN'T YOU?!

WH...?!

RISE

THE PUNISHMENT MUST BE SEVERE, THAT WE SEND A CLEAR MESSAGE AND DETER OTHERS.

IT'S WHAT MAGIC'S MEANT FOR!

I'M JUST TAKIN' THE DREAMS OF THE COMMON P—

EEP ?!

FWICK

DO NOT FLATTER YOURSELF.

...WILL CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE DREAMS OF THE AGGRESSORS YOU ENABLE, ARE...

...TO THE VICTIMS THEY PREY UPON, UNBEARABLE *NIGHTMARES.*

NO ATTEMPT AT JUSTIFICATION ...

MAY THE PRINCIPLES BE EVER UPHELD...

...AND THE PENNANT'S JUSTICE SWIFT UPON THE GUILTY.

HMM... I SEE.

AND THAT IS WHY YOU'VE BROUGHT HER BEFORE US?

YES! THIS *ANGER* OF HERS HAS GROWN COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL.

I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH IT ANYMORE. I NEED THE KNIGHTS' AUTHORITY.

COULD YOU *PLEASE* CLEAR HER MIND? JUST THE LATEST INCIDENT. THAT'D BE ENOUGH.

SHE'S THROWING AN ENORMOUS FIT OVER ONE TINY MISUNDER-STANDING.

FROM THE WAY SHE GOES ON ABOUT IT, YOU'D THINK IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD!

SHF

MAY THE PRINCIPLES BE EVER UPHELD...

...!

...AND IT HAS TO DO WITH YOU AND THIS PATRON OF YOURS.

THERE CERTAINLY IS A PROBLEM HERE...

WH-WHAT'RE YOU...?!

GET THIS THING OFF ME!

!!!

FW

SWIP

...AND THE PENNANT'S JUSTICE SWIFT UPON THE GUILTY.

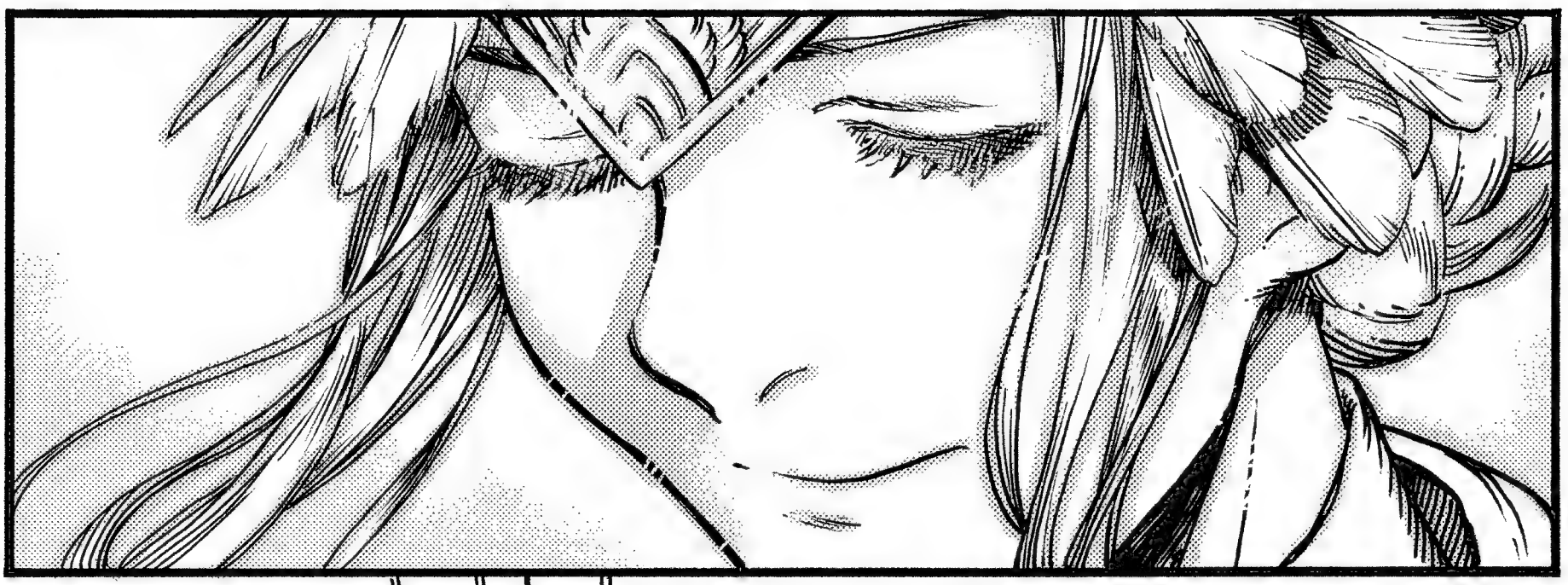
THE ORDER METES OUT PUNISHMENT UPON THE GUILTY.

HAVEN'T YOU HEARD ANYTHING I'VE SAID?!

YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG! *SHE'S* THE PROBLEM HERE!

AND YOUR APPRENTICE ...

...IS NOT THE ONE DESERVING OF BLAME.



ZRSH

H-HOLD ON! YOU DON'T WANNA DO THIS!

YEAH! I JUST REMEMBERED!

WIPE MY MIND, AND YOU'D BE LOSING A *VERY* VALUABLE LEAD!

?!

YOUR CONDUCT IS UNBECOMING OF A WITCH.

THE SENTENCE IS THEREFORE JUST.

I WAS TESTING OUT MY GLASSES, RIGHT? AND I CAUGHT A GLIMPSE...

...OF THE KINDA PERSON WHO ACTUALLY DESERVES YOUR ATTENTION!

TH-THIS MORNING! I SAW SOMETHING *MAJOR!*

EXPLAIN. AND IT HAD BEST BE COMPELLING.

IT WAS A MAN.

AND UNDER HIS ROBE, THERE WAS A SEAL TATTOOED RIGHT ON HIS CHEST!

PLEASE BE HERE, CUSTAS.

I HAVE TO FIND YOU.

FSH

Witch Hat Atelier

Chapter 50

AH. WHAT A PLEASURE.

...ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY TO REPORT?

I'M *VERY* SORRY TO DISAPPOINT YOU, BUT NO!

NOTHING AT ALL!

AND WHAT BUSINESS, PRAY TELL, DOES THE ORDER HAVE WITH US *THIS* TIME?

FWICK

SHOULD THAT AT ANY TIME CHANGE, I WOULD IMPLORE YOU TO MAKE USE OF THIS.

'TIS GOOD TO HEAR.

...I SEE.

RUMMAGE

WAIT. THIS SEAL...

WH...?!

HEY!

PARDON THE INTRUSION.

EASTHIES! WAIT!

WHAT IN GOODNESS' NAME IS *IN* HERE?

THIS SCROLL IS BOUND WITH LOCKWAX.

IF WE WERE, WE WOULDN'T BE DOING OUR JOB.

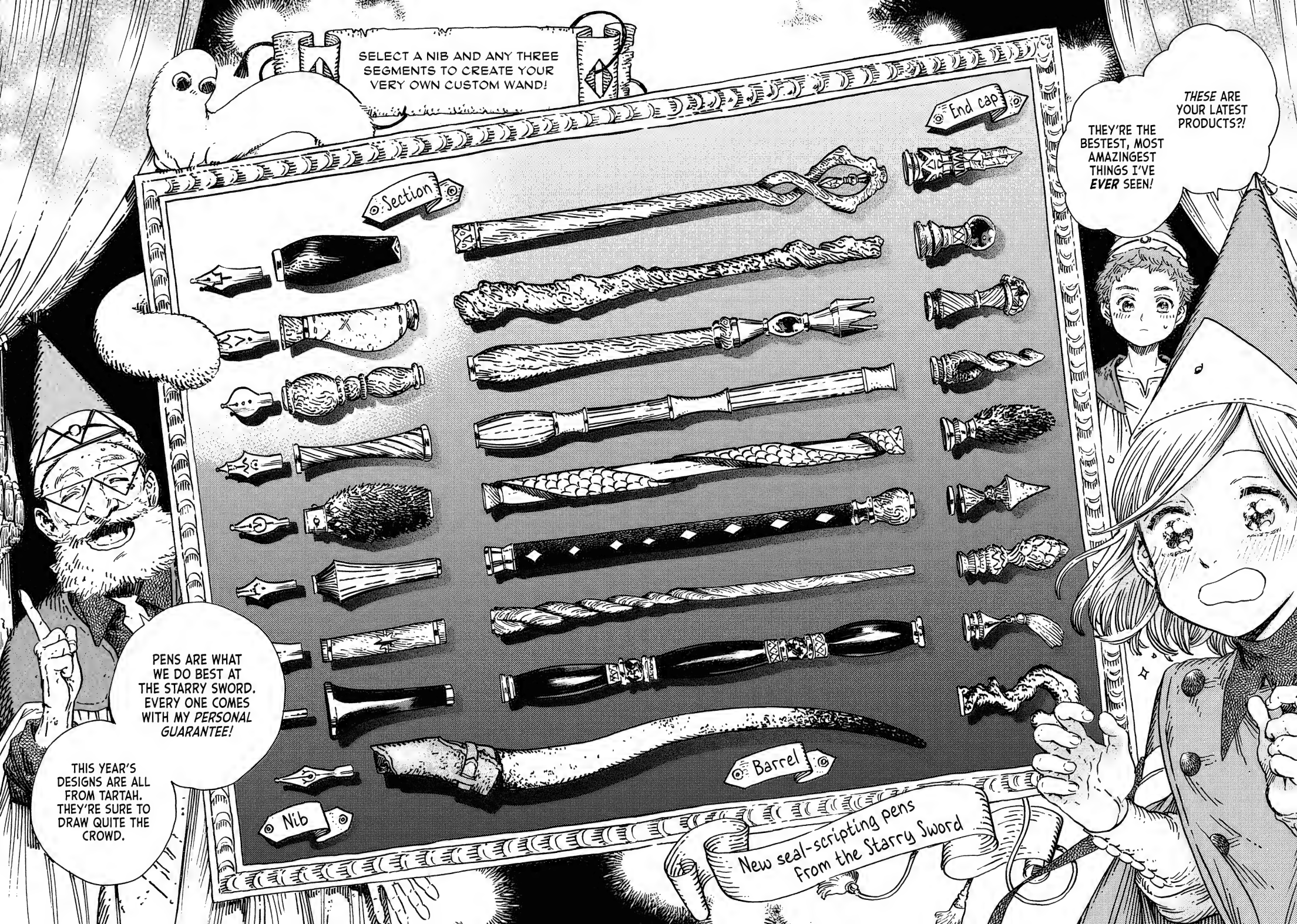
IS THE ORDER EXPECTING SOME KIND OF DISTURBANCE?

OF COURSE NOT.

...

THIS IS

INCREDIBLE!


SELECT A NIB AND ANY THREE SEGMENTS TO CREATE YOUR VERY OWN CUSTOM WAND!
End cap
Section
Barrel
Nib
New seal-scripting pens From the Starry Sword
PENS ARE WHAT WE DO BEST AT THE STARRY SWORD. EVERY ONE COMES WITH MY *PERSONAL GUARANTEE!*
THIS YEAR'S DESIGNS ARE ALL FROM TARTAH. THEY'RE SURE TO DRAW QUITE THE CROWD.
THESE ARE YOUR LATEST PRODUCTS?!
THEY'RE THE BESTEST, MOST AMAZINGEST THINGS I'VE ***EVER*** SEEN!

A PEN'S IDEAL THICK-NESS AND CURVATURE...

...AND EVEN ITS LENGTH AND WEIGHT ARE DIFFERENT FOR EACH CASTER, RIGHT?

GOODNESS! YOU MADE THESE, TARTAH?

OH, UM... YUP.

AND HANDS GROW AND CHANGE WITH AGE...

...SO I FIGURED IF THERE WERE A WAND WITH PARTS THAT COULD BE FREELY EXCHANGED...

...IT'D BE A WAY FOR *EVERYONE* TO HAVE THE PERFECT PEN.

THAT'S MY GRANDSON! REAL SMART COOKIE!

GOOD FOR YOU!

FINE WORK, TARTAH! VERY FINE INDEED!

WELL, LOOK AT YOU...

WHAT A GREAT IDEA! YOU'RE A GENIUS, TARTAH!

AND... OH, UM...

GRIN

ニコォ

TALK ABOUT EMBARRASSING! THAT WAS ENOUGH ATTENTION FOR A WHOLE **LIFETIME!**

GRNNNGH!

わ し WOW!

HMM... NOW I'M ALMOST TEMPTED TO GET A NEW PEN MYSELF.

GO RIGHT AHEAD, LITTLE MISS!

わ し AHH!

わ し OOH!

CAN *WE* TRY PUTTING ONE TOGETHER, TOO?

OH! UM, COCO?

I... I WANTED YOU TO HAVE THIS.

I MEAN, UM... IT'S THE PEN I PROMISED YOU.

I'VE... I'VE NEVER FELT ANYTHING LIKE IT.

IT'S PERFECT.

IT FEELS SO NATURAL TO HOLD.

IT'S LIKE IT'S MOLDED RIGHT TO THE SHAPE OF MY HAND.

OH!

HOW DO I DESCRIBE IT? IT LOOKED LIKE THE WAY I MIGHT GRIP A *STONE*.

...'CAUSE I NOTICED YOU TEND TO GRIP REALLY HARD WHEN YOU'RE CONCENTRATING.

I DECIDED TO MAKE THE BASE UNUSUALLY THICK...

YEAH.

YOU...

YOU PUT ALL THAT THOUGHT INTO IT, JUST FOR ME?

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY IT'S HOW I GOT THE IDEA FOR OUR LATEST PRODUCT.

A PERFECT FIT...

...FOR EVERYONE...

CUSTOM PARTS— A PERFECT FIT FOR EVERYONE!

I'LL MAKE SURE TO DRAW LOTS AND LOTS OF SEALS WITH IT.

I PROMISE TO PUT IT TO GOOD USE.

THANK YOU.

...A WITCH *WORTHY* OF SUCH A BEAUTIFUL WAND.

AND... AND I'M SURE THAT ONE DAY, I'LL FINALLY BECOME...

What's this got to do with Tetia?!

Haha! You sound like Tetia!

?

?

...WHEN YOU PUT IT LIKE THAT, I ALMOST FEEL LIKE I SHOULD BE THANKING *YOU!*

GEE, UM...

!

GIVE ME *ONE* GOOD REASON WHY I SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO JOIN THE SILVER EVE PROCESSION!

WHY NOT?!

HEY, I WANTED TO ASK. WHAT KIND OF CONTRAPTION DID YOU MAKE FOR—

I REFUSE TO LET THIS GO UNTIL YOU TELL ME *WHY* YOU WON'T LET ME BE IN THE PROCESSION!

AND I'VE SHOWN I CAN DO BIG, SPECTACULAR STUFF! REMEMBER THE BIRD OF LIGHT?!

YOU'VE SEEN HOW WELL I CAST! I'VE GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH SKILL TO KEEP UP WITH THE ADULTS!

THIS IS *SO* UNFAIR!

FINE. YOU REALLY WANNA KNOW WHY?

...YOU'RE ONLY PROVING MY POINT. YOU'RE NOT READY.

IF YOU CAN'T FIGURE THAT OUT FOR YOURSELF...

AGOTT!

DASH

IT'S 'CAUSE THE PROCESSION ISN'T ABOUT DRAWING ATTENTION TO *YOURSELF.*

IT'S NOT SAFE TO GO OFF ON YOUR OWN!

WAIT! YOU MUST STAY NEAR THE TENT!

COCO! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU!

ZWRSH

SHE SEEMED REALLY ANGRY...

RICHEH AND I ARE BARELY HANGING ON!

HURRY! COME HERE!

YOU WON'T *BELIEVE* THE CROWDS YOUR SPELL IS DRAWING!

THIS WAY TO THE END OF THE LINE.

STREEETCH

LIKE I SAID! YOUR SPELL IS A *HUGE* HIT WITH THE TOWNS-PEOPLE. LOOK AT THEM ALL!

WH... WHAT *IS* ALL THIS?

GAAAAAPE

No waaaaay!

HOLY SMOKES...

WHAT KIND OF SPELL DID YOU *BRING*, COCO?

IT'S LIKE I'VE TURNED INTO A WITCH!

LOOK AT ME! I'M FLYING!

FWRSH

YIPPEE!

MOMMY, ARE YOU WATCHING?!

UM, REMEMBER THE WINGCLOAK WE DESIGNED AS A WAY TO GET AROUND?

I TRIED TO USE THE SEAL TO MAKE A CONTRAPTION FIT FOR SALE.

...BUT I WASN'T EXPECTING *THIS* BIG A RESPONSE.

THEY TAKE A LOOONG TIME TO MAKE, SO MASTER QIFREY SUGGESTED I FINISH JUST A FEW AND LET PEOPLE TRY THEM OUT...

THEY ALL SEEM TO BE HAVING A LOT OF FUN.

I GUESS EVERYBODY DREAMS OF SOARING THROUGH THE SKY.

YEAH. THEY DO LOOK HAPPY.

I DID IT!

I'M FLYING WITH MY VERY OWN MAGIC!

O FRESHLY WASHED SHEET, CLEAN AND WHITE...

I COMMAND YOU NOW— BE MY CLOAK OF FLIGHT!

WHEN I FINALLY GOT MY SYLPH SHOES, I WANTED TO FLY ALL DAY.

USED TO...?

THAT'S HOW I USED TO FEEL, TOO.

GUESS WHAT? WHEN I GROW UP, I'M GONNA BE A WITCH, TOO!

TMP TMP TMP

THANK YOU, MISS WITCH! I LOVE YOUR CONTRAP-TION!

...JUST LIKE YOU?

DO YOU THINK I CAN BECOME A WITCH...

DO YOU THINK I CAN DO IT?

YOU GOTTA BE BORN WITH SPECIAL POWERS TO CAST MAGIC. WE AREN'T LIKE THEM.

HEY, NOW. DON'T GO BUGGIN' THE WITCHES WITH SILLY QUESTIONS.

WE AREN'T?

DADDY, WHY CAN'T I BE A WITCH?!

I WANNA BE A WITCH!

CAN'T I GET POWERS, TOO?

SO I CAN'T BE A WITCH?

BUT WHAT IF I TRY MY HARDEST?

LET'S GO SIT DOWN.

C'MON. WE'LL FIND SOMEWHERE QUIET.

ARE YOU OKAY? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD.

UM, COCO...?

I KNEW EVENTU-ALLY...

...I'D HEAR SOMEONE SAY IT.

I HAD THE SAME DREAM...

...AND I CRIED THE SAME TEARS.

SHE'S EXACTLY HOW I USED TO BE.

I USED TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME THINKING ABOUT WHAT KIND OF ANSWER I COULD GIVE.

HI CLENCH?

BUT THERE'S NOTHING I CAN SAY.

...AND I CAN'T TELL HER THAT IF SHE KEEPS ON HOPING, SOMEDAY IT'LL HAPPEN.

I CAN'T TELL HER IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO BECOME A WITCH...

BECAUSE NO MATTER WHICH I CHOOSE, IT'S ALL JUST A BIG LIE.

NEITHER ANSWER WORKS.

I'VE EXPERIENCED BOTH SIDES...

WHAT DO I DO, TARTAH?

WHAT AM I... *SUPPOSED* TO DO?

...BECAUSE I'VE LEARNED THAT EVERYONE CAN BE A WITCH, BUT I'VE SEEN THE AWFUL THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO THE WORLD WHEN MAGIC RUNS FREE.

...AND NOW I FEEL TRAPPED BETWEEN **HOPE** AND **DESPAIR**...

I KNOW THAT LITTLE GIRL'S PAIN...

...AND I KNOW WHY WITCHES HAVE THE RULES THEY DO.

WHICH WAY IS THE ***RIGHT*** WAY WHEN THERE'S ***NO WAY*** OUT?!

IT ALL HURTS SO BAD...!

ALL OF THAT PAIN...

THAT'S NOT ON *YOU*, COCO!

EVER... EVER SINCE THAT DAY ON THE HILL...

...MY MIND KEEPS GOING OVER AND OVER THE SAME KIND OF THOUGHTS.

I FEEL GUILTY, LIKE I REALLY *SHOULD* HAVE DONE MORE...

TARTAH...?

BUT...

NONE OF THIS IS *OUR* FAULT, COCO.

THEY'VE BEEN FORCED UPON US.

WE DIDN'T CREATE THOSE LIES.

TO WHAT?

YEAH. I GET IT. I STILL WOULD'VE LIKED FOR CUSTAS TO...

I KNOW, BUT...

TO *WHAT?*

H-HOW...?

C-
CUSTAS
...?!

WHAT
HAPPENED?!

THOSE
LEGS!

CHAPTER 50 ♦ END

Witch Hat Atelier

Chapter 51

FWRSH

H-HOW...?

WHAT *ARE* THOSE LEGS?!

C-CUSTAS ...?!

YOU'RE... YOU'RE *WALKING!*

YOU CAN USE YOUR LEGS AGAIN?!

TMP

FWUM

BUT THE DOCTORS... THEY SAID YOU HAD A LONG WAY TO GO. THEY WEREN'T EVEN SURE IF YOU'D FULLY HEAL!

!

SOME KIND OF FORBIDDEN MAGIC?

BUT WHERE? HOW?

OH, NO... DON'T TELL ME IT'S...

GRIN

WHAT'S WITH THE FACES?

WHY'RE YOU SO SURPRISED?

MAGIC CAN'T HEAL MY LEGS.

YOU TOLD ME SO YOURSELVES. DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

THESE JUST HELP ME GET AROUND.

A REAL FRIENDLY WITCH GAVE 'EM TO ME.

I'M REALLY HAPPY—

O-OH. WELL, THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.

*I'VE NEVER SEEN A SPELL LIKE **THAT** BEFORE. BUT AS LONG AS IT'S SOMETHING HE'S **WEAR-ING**...*

FSHHH

ヒュッ

FWSSSK

WHADDYA THINK?

LIKE 'EM? THEY *STRETCH* AND *BEND*...

...AND TAKE ME WHEREVER I WANT.

LFSH

LFSH

THEY'RE MY BRAND NEW, *MAGIC* LEGS.

Y'KNOW, FOR A MOMENT THERE, YOU LOOKED ALMOST *RELIEVED.*

??

HAPPY ABOUT WHAT? HAPPY TO HEAR THAT MY LEGS ARE STILL BROKEN?

SAID YOU WERE "REALLY HAPPY."

...THAT'D MEAN SOMEONE CAST A *FORBIDDEN* SPELL ON ME. AND THAT'D BE A *BIG* PROBLEM, WOULDN'T IT?

'CAUSE IF MY LEGS *WERE* HEALED...

THAT'S WHAT YOU WERE THINKING, WASN'T IT?!

GRK...!

SHRRRK

TWRRST

TWRRST

TWRRST

TWRRST

?!

WHERE'D YOU HEAR THAT?! HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT—

'CAUSE I'M AN OUTSIDER, RIGHT?

'CAUSE YOU TWO WERE BORN WITCHES, AND I WASN'T?

I'M SUPPOSED KEEP RELYING ON ONE OF *YOU* TO SHOW UP, 'CAUSE IT'S *BETTER* FOR ME THAT WAY.

WOULDN'T WANT ME KNOWING HOW TO HELP MYSELF, WOULD YA?

OOPS. AM I NOT ALLOWED TO KNOW ABOUT MAGIC?

I'VE BEEN WONDERIN', TARTAH...

CUSTAS! I...

GNGH!

THAT'S WHAT YOU BELIEVE, RIGHT?!

THAT'S REAL CUTE, TARTAH.

WERE YOU AFRAID I'D DO SOMETHING LIKE *THIS?*

WAVER

'CAUSE I WAS BORN ON THE STREETS AND WOULDN'T USE IT *PROPERLY?*

WAS IT 'CAUSE I COULDN'T BE TRUSTED?

ALL THIS TIME, YOU'VE HAD SOMETHIN' REAL *SPECIAL* YOU COULD'VE SHARED...

...BUT FOR SOME REASON, YOU HAD ME PRACTICIN' HERBS AND ALPHABET LETTERS.

SHH

RRK

REAL GOOD JOKE YOU PLAYED, TELLIN' ME YOU WANTED TO *HELP*...

...AND THAT YOU CAME UP WITH A SPELL *JUST FOR ME!*

PWOOF

...!

WELL HERE'S ONE FOR *YOU!*

THAT SPELL ON YOUR FEET?

KOFF

KOFF

COCO...!

I'VE SEEN HOW SCARY AND UNPREDICTABLE ANCIENT MAGIC CAN BE.

THEY'RE FORBIDDEN FOR A GOOD REASON.

I'VE NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE, AND TARTAH HASN'T, EITHER.

AND I'M PRETTY SURE IT'S SOMETHING NONE OF THE WITCHES *WE* KNOW COULD USE, EVEN IF THEY WANTED TO.

SO WHAT IF IT IS?

IT'S ***DANGEROUS***, CUSTAS!

I ***KNOW*** WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU START CASTING SPELLS YOU'VE NEVER SEEN AND KNOW NOTHING ABOUT.

WHUD

AHHH!

SWK

COCO!!

WHERE'S THE DANGER, HUH?

...OVER ONE TINY SPELL THAT LETS ME *WALK* AGAIN.

ALL THIS FUSS...

YOU'RE GONNA FORBID *THIS?*

HOW ABOUT FIRE?

OR KNIVES 'N' SWORDS?

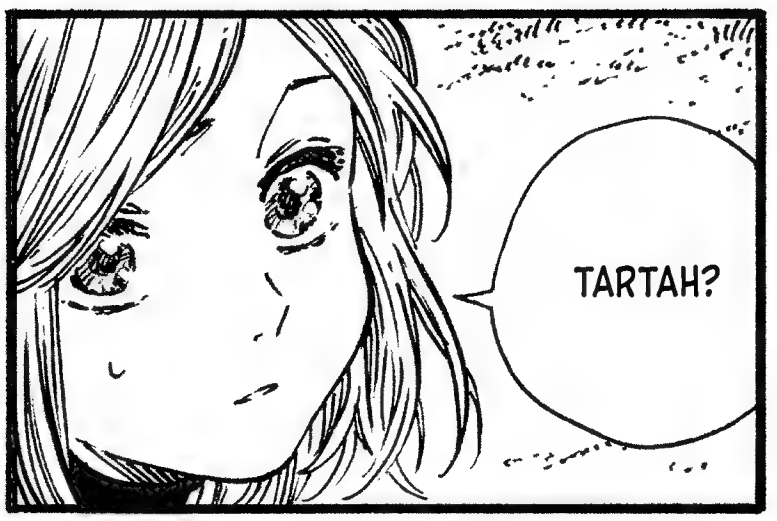
AND WHAT ABOUT ALL THE OTHER *DANGEROUS* TOOLS PEOPLE PUT UP WITH 'CAUSE THEY'RE USEFUL?

HOW MANY PEOPLE *DIE* FROM THOSE THINGS EVERY DAY? BUT PEOPLE GO ON USIN' 'EM!

EVEN *HERBS* MAKE POISON.

WHERE DO YOU GET OFF, DECIDING WHICH SPELLS ARE WORTH THE RISK?
WHO ARE *YOU* TO DECIDE WHO DOES AND DOESN'T GET TO USE MAGIC?
IT'S ALL LIES! EVERY WITCH IS A LIAR!
AND THAT INCLUDES BOTH OF *YOU!*
THE THINGS YOU LIARS SAY...
...WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE A SINGLE WORD?!

YOU'RE...
YOU'RE RIGHT.


TARTAH?

BUT IN THE END, IT WAS *MY* DECISION TO FOLLOW THEM.

IT'S NOT LIKE I WANTED IT TO BE THIS WAY.
THE WITCHES HAVE PRINCIPLES— *RULES*—THAT SAY WE CAN'T TELL YOU.

I'M SORRY, CUSTAS.

I'M SORRY FOR KEEPING IT A SECRET FROM YOU.

I GUESS...

...I'M NOT...

I'M NOT MUCH OF A FRIEND, AM I?

!

FWING

HMPH. NOT EVEN GONNA DENY IT, HUH?

I GET IT. PLAYIN' THE GOOD LITTLE BOY WHEN YOUR LIFE IS ON THE LINE.

TMP

WELL, TOO BAD. I AIN'T FALLIN' FOR YOUR LIES.

RIGHT NOW, YOU'LL SAY ANYTHING TO SAVE YOUR SKIN.

HE WANTED TO DO EVERYTHING HE COULD AND MORE.

BUT IT'S TRUE. I SAW HIS STRUGGLE, CUSTAS.

...

GRIT

!

ALL THOSE TIMES HE TOOK YOU TO THE STOREHOUSE TO LEARN ABOUT HERBS?

JUST BY BEING THERE, HE WAS VIOLATING THE PRINCIPLES. BUT HE DID IT ANYWAY. FOR *YOU.*

SO, PLEASE...

EVERYTHING WE DID, WE DID BECAUSE WE WANTED TO HELP YOU. THAT'S NOT A LIE!

BOTH TARTAH AND I... WE...

IF YOU BELIEVE NOTHING ELSE, AT LEAST BELIEVE THAT!

2NSH

YOU WANT ME TO BELIEVE YOU CARE?

CLUTCH

COCO...

十一人ケ CLAMP

THEN PROVE IT WITH *ACTIONS*, NOT WORDS.

WHAT IS THIS?! I CAN'T GET IT OFF!

WH...?!

I WOULD ADVISE YOU NOT TRY TO PRY THEM OPEN.

WH... WHO *ARE* YOU?!

?!

THERE IS A PROPER MANNER OF REMOVAL. ANYTHING ELSE, AND THE BAND WILL TIGHTEN, AND HEAT AND PRESSURE WILL TRANSFER THE INSIDE SEAL FROM STEEL TO SKIN.

FWUM

WMF

I AM ININIA, AND ININIA IS ME.

AND YOU ARE COCO...

...AND YOU, TARTAH.

I KNOW THEY ARE NOT THINGS TO BE IMPOSED UPON ALLIES.

BUT AT THE PRESENT MOMENT, YOU ARE NOT, AND SO THEY MUST REMAIN.

WHEN YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED THAT YOU ARE FRIENDS, I WILL GLADLY REMOVE THE CUFFS.

YES. THAT IS CORRECT.

TMP

!ぉ! FWIP

HUH?!

YOU MUST BE...

YOU'RE THE WITCH WHO GAVE CUSTAS HIS NEW LEGS, AREN'T YOU?

WHY WOULD I DENY AID TO A FRIEND IN NEED?

CUSTAS IS ONE OF US NOW—A NEW FRIEND AND ALLY.

I AM ONLY PROVIDING THE THINGS WHICH YOU SELFISHLY FAILED TO OFFER.

FWUMMM

AND JUST WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING TO HAVE US DO?

YOU TWO ARE GONNA GIVE ININIA 'N' ME A HAND.

HAH!

YOU REALLY NEED TO ASK?

...AND RIP 'EM ALL TO SHREDS!

WE'RE GONNA TAKE YOUR PRECIOUS CHAINS OF FATE...

HAAAAAA

Gloves of Curious Strength

UGHHH... THIS IS SO UNCOOL!

DIDN'T WE *ALL* AGREE TO HELP OUT WITH MISTER NOLNOA'S SHOP?

WHERE DID EVERYONE ELSE *GO*?!

AAH??

WHUMP

I WANNA TAKE A BREAK, TOO, YOU KNOW!

AND GO SEE THE FESTIVAL!

THE INSTANT THEY GET BACK, YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE I'M DUMPING THE REST IN THEIR LAPS AND LEAVING THIS WHOLE TENT FAR...

...BEHIND?

PSEE!

PSEE!

BWUMF

PWEEEEE!

SHWIK

IS THERE SOMETHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT—

WHAT'S THE MATTER, BRUSH-BUDDY?

SQ-THNK

PWEEE!

PWEE!

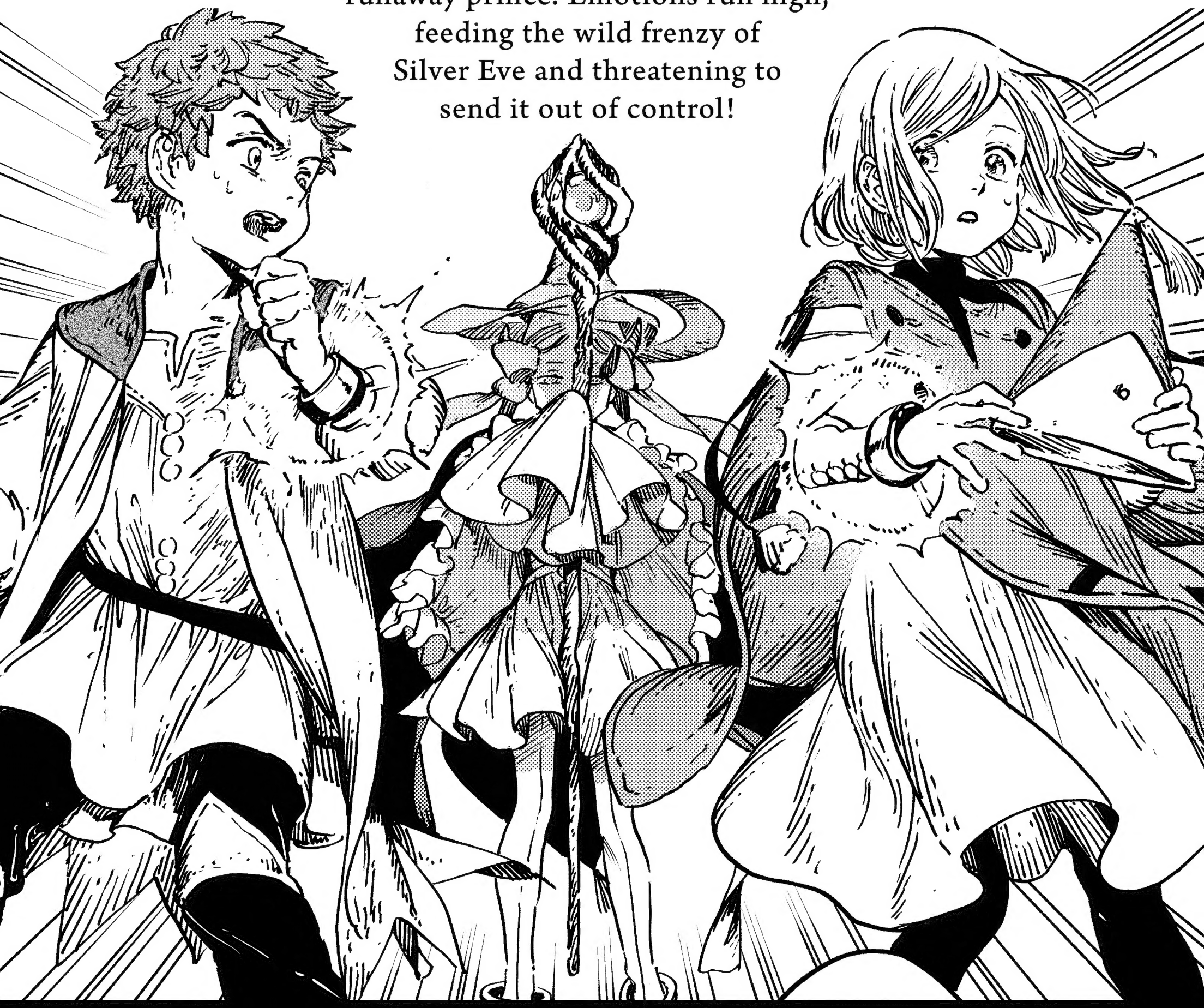
?

OH! UM... HELLO.

ERP!

ON THESE SHACKLES ARE ETCHED
MYSTICAL CRIMES AND DIRE PUNISHMENTS.
COCO AND HER FRIENDS
FIND THEMSELVES LOCKED
INTO A TERRIBLE NEW
TEST OF FRIENDSHIP.

As Coco and Tartah feel Ininia's bands close tight on their wrists, Tetia stumbles across the runaway prince. Emotions run high, feeding the wild frenzy of Silver Eve and threatening to send it out of control!



Witch Hat Atelier VOLUME 10: COMING SOON!!

Witch Hat Atelier 9

Kodansha Digital Edition

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